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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/531,945~	04/19/2005	Mark H. Shipton	123458	4508
25944	7590	01/24/2008	EXAMINER	
OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC P.O. BOX 320850 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320-4850			SPEER, TIMOTHY M	
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1794				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
01/24/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/531,945	SHIPTON ET AL.	
Examiner	<b>Art Unit</b>		
Timothy M. Speer	1794		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

1)  Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 November 2007.

2a)  This action is **FINAL**.                            2b)  This action is non-final.

3)  Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

4)  Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-8 and 12-23 is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6)  Claim(s) 9-11, 24 and 25 is/are rejected.  
7)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

9)  The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)  The drawing(s) filed on 19 April 2005 is/are: a)  accepted or b)  objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)  The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

12)  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)  All   b)  Some \* c)  None of:

1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1)  Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2)  Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3)  Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 06/17/05.

4)  Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_ .  
5)  Notice of Informal Patent Application  
6)  Other: \_\_\_\_ .

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Election/Restrictions***

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group II (claims 9-11, 24 and 25) in the reply filed on 11/02/07 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that a search of the non-elected inventions would not be an undue burden. This is not found persuasive because the variously claimed inventions are separately classified, being drawn to separate statutory categories of inventions, and, accordingly, a search of the elected article claims does not necessarily entail a search of the non-elected method and composition claims. Therefore, claims 9-11, 24 and 25 will be treated on the merits and claims 1-8 and 12-23 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

2. The information disclosure statement filed 06/17/05 has been considered and made of record.

### ***Claim Objections***

3. Claims 9 and 10 are objected to because of the following informalities: it appears that the word "comprising" at line 3 should be --comprises--. Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 9-11, 24, and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

6. The term "relative oxide or nitride imbalance" in claims 9-11, 24, and 25 is unclear, rendering the claims indefinite. While the term is defined in the specification with respect to starting material powders which may be used to prepare the claimed coatings (see page 3, third full paragraph), the term is not defined with respect to the characteristic intended in the claimed coatings. The term could, for instance, connote that the areas are relative to stoichiometric spinel, i.e., that the spinel is doped, that the areas are relative to other areas in the coating, or that the areas are deficient with respect to the substrate. The meaning, however, cannot be ascertained and, accordingly, the scope of the claims cannot be reasonably determined.

7. Claims 24 and 25 provide for the use of spinel having regions of relative oxide or nitride imbalance, but, since the claim does not set forth any steps involved in the method/process, it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass. A claim is indefinite where it merely recites a use without any active, positive steps delimiting how this use is actually practiced.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

8. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

9. Claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a

process, i.e., results in a claim which is not a proper process claim under 35 U.S.C. 101. See for example *Ex parte Dunki*, 153 USPQ 678 (Bd.App. 1967) and *Clinical Products, Ltd. v. Brenner*, 255 F. Supp. 131, 149 USPQ 475 (D.D.C. 1966).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Takabatake (USPN 3,927,223).

12. Takabatake teaches spinel coatings formed on metal substrates, wherein the spinels may be doped with metal oxides (col. 2, line 67 to col. 3, line 3, for instance). Since the dopant distribution will not be perfectly homogeneous in the starting powders, it is the Examiner's position that the resultant films will exhibit regions of relative oxide imbalance, as presently claimed. Regarding the claimed physical properties of the films, e.g., defect zones and oriented grain boundaries, the films of Takabatake are made by plasma spraying, as recited in the present claims, and, accordingly, are considered to meet these claim characteristics.

***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy M. Speer whose telephone number is 571-272-8385. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Keith D. Hendricks can be reached on 571-272-1401. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Timothy M. Speer